



**Appendix P – Public Engagement and Comments**  
**PWSA’s Strategic Plan for Stormwater**  
**Project Number 2020-O25-OPS**  
**September 20, 2023**

## **Overview**

Appendix P presents the feedback that PWSA received about the *Strategic Plan for Stormwater*. These comments provided PWSA with valuable input on the strategy outlined in the report. PWSA is also committed to long-term public engagement on the topic of stormwater, and the concerns and ideas that the public shared with PWSA will be integrated into these initiatives as well.

## **Summary**

PWSA appreciates all the reviewers and their time spent reviewing this plan to provide valuable comments, throughout the Stormwater Strategic Planning Process. The comments received from this plan will be incorporated as we develop a path forward for ongoing stormwater planning and implementation. PWSA will keep in mind the “p4 Framework” of People, Planet, Place, and Performance as we move forward with planning and ensure equity is valued. Some of the key comments received in this plan are as follows:

- **Communications Framework:** Creating opportunities for two-way communication is important. PWSA needs to invest more in community relations and engagement. The stormwater ambassador program was a successful initiative that can help build trust within the community. Partnering with grassroots organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGO) can help expand PWSA’s reach.
- **Joint Task Force:** Roles and responsibilities need to be outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Pittsburgh and PWSA, and there should be an avenue for grassroots and community leaders to be involved.
- **Priority Areas of Investment:** The maps rely heavily on reported information; however, many people do not report issues in fear of negative consequences. Equity and areas of opportunities should be ranked higher as priorities.
- **Investment Strategies:** Collaboration with the residents in neighborhoods where projects will take place is important to implement the correct stormwater facility practice.
- **Establishing guiding principles for level of service (LOS) and flooding:** LOS is a complicated topic and needs to be explained more clearly in layperson’s terms.
- **Leveraging Stormwater fee:** It is important for PWSA to proactively communicate how the stormwater fee revenues are being used.

The Stormwater Strategic Plan is the first step in PWSA’s stormwater planning process. It presents a high-level, visionary framework for future investments and is part of a larger wet weather planning effort currently underway. Throughout our planning process, PWSA is committed to engaging stakeholders and partners, soliciting input, incorporating concerns, and gathering feedback into the decision-making process. PWSA will incorporate next steps, a timeline, and how the Stormwater Strategic Plan coordinates with ALCOSAN’s Clean Water Plan into ongoing and long-term public engagement on stormwater.

## Comments

The public comment period ended on June 30, 2023, and PWSA received the following comments:

### Source of Comments

1. Comments from the public meetings PWSA held – “Stormwater Conversations” – extensive comments from six meetings as presented in the following section.
2. Comments received electronically on the Stormwater Strategic Plan Feedback Form - 17, and Comments received **from Other Sources (e.g. letters, emails, phone conversations) – 20**
3. Comments received electronically on the EngagePGH website - 37

### Comment Category

The feedback is organized according to the “Top Six Priority Actions” which are the six key actions in the Strategic Plan that provide focus for PWSA’s stormwater strategy. These are:

1. Develop and Implement a Communication Framework to Increase Transparency and Understanding of the PWSA Strategy and the Stormwater Fee Value Proposition
2. Institute a Joint Task Force to Develop City-Wide Action Plans for More Coordinated and Effective Management of Stormwater
3. Analyze Priority Areas for Investment
4. Define Initial Investment Strategies
5. Establish Guiding Principles and Comprehensive Approach to Stormwater and Flooding “Level of Service”
6. Leverage Stormwater Fee Impact Through Public and Private Investment, Innovative Partnerships and Technologies, and Job Training Programs

### PWSA’s Responses to Comments

See each section below for PWSA’s responses to comments.

## 1. Comments from Public Meetings – “Stormwater Conversations”

In the spring of 2023 the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA) hosted six Stormwater Conversations – these were community workshops spanning geographic areas in Pittsburgh to gather feedback about the Strategic Plan for Stormwater, and specifically on the Six Priority Areas in the Plan during facilitated, small group table discussions.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Geographic Area</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Number Attending</b>
April 13, 2023	West End	Sheraden Healthy Active Living Center	25
April 18, 2023	South	Phillips Recreation Center	5
April 25, 2023	East End	Kingsley Association	40+
May 16, 2023	Northside	Brighton Heights Healthy Active Living Center	10
May 23, 2023	Central	Hazelwood Healthy Active Living Center	15
June 20, 2023	Downtown and Vicinity	Carnegie Library – Hill District	15

Below summarizes the comments by common priority area theme, and PWSA’s responses.

**Communications:**

Common Theme

- @ South, @ Hazelwood, East End, West End–
  - Multiple methods is necessary, be mindful that email and social media require digital access and that may be a barrier
    - Innovation –
      - Phone and bill inserts are good for elderly people and people without internet access, and more reminders
      - Provide virtual options or help people get rides to meetings
      - Post flyers at food banks, libraries, bus stops, healthy active living centers, VFW, church bulletins, door hangers
      - Ensure all renters also receive bill inserts, and encourage other households to read bill insert
      - Door knocking doesn’t work anymore
      - Have WQED or other tv commercials advertise for meeting
      - Use nonprofit partners to help spread the word
      - Use community days to spread the word
      - Use the website to advertise and post any real time updates on the website
      - Present on what to look for to report sw issues

- Have news anchors send a message about how to report backup/stormwater issues
  - Collect phone numbers for registrants in case we need to cancel
- @west end, South, east end, hazelwood
  - Everyone likes food – Meet people where they are
    - Innovation –
      - Hot dogs in the park to connect with residents where they live
- @East End
  - Presentation was very technical, need to have it in layman’s term
- @West, North
  - Frequency of meetings. Only have meetings when you have something good to say, ppl want to know what PWSA is spending money on.
    - Explain what the rate increase is paying for, what were they paying for before?
- @ Hill District
  - Make clear what the purpose of the meeting is and expected outcome
- @ Hill District
  - Need more opportunities to talk to PWSA about misc problems (water and sewer open hours)
- @ West End
  - Define catch basin

**Joint Task Force**

- **Common Theme:**
  - @ West, North, East, South
    - Define roles and responsibilities of members, need people who can make decisions present
    - All city departments, city council, Mayor, and PennDOT should be involved and talk to each other, landowners should be involved (City, PennDOT, URA, Housing authority)
  - @East, North
    - Would like citizens represented in some way, homeowners and renters, including EJ communities
  - @hazelwood
    - Commercial and business representation
    - Would like an auditor to ensure money goes to the right neighborhood
  - @ Hazelwood, north
    - Keep the group small, neighborhood based
  - @ Hill District
    - Website or EngagePGH website to show progress of problems being resolved and status
  - @ Hill District
    - Want this effort to create job opportunities

**Priority Areas of investment/ Investment Strategies**

Common Theme

- @– Brighton Heights, Hazelwood, East End
  - Investment Strategy partnerships
    - Coordinate with Housing Authority
    - Partner with playgrounds, and vacant land, land banks to do projects
    - Partner with first time home buyers to educate and report problems – try to get funding from programs to partner
    - People want to see people in their neighborhood working
    - Collaborate with other agencies already doing development to incorporate SW
    - Utility coordination to not dig up road multiple times
    - Partnerships to stabilize hillsides and add more trees
    - Add more green
- @West End –
  - Who is responsible for springs
- @East End, SMR
  - Landslide strategies
  - For GI technologies, maintenance is important to get residents to like projects
- @ Brighton Heights
  - Provide more education to residents on what they can do to manage their own SW
- @ SMR
  - Have maintenance program for state roadway maintenance

### **Levels of Service/Stormwater Fee**

#### Common Themes

- @South, Hazelwood
  - Increase SW fee for commercial properties to incentivize them to reduce impervious areas
  - Public Private Partnerships
- @ Brighton Heights, SMR
  - With the SW fee they expect to see more maintenance (Cleaning catch basins) and community amenities in projects
- @ West End, East End, SMR
  - More engagement on SW Fee and how it's being used, what happens if you don't pay the fee, more information on financial assistance programs
- @East End
  - Sliding scale for the SW Fee

#### Common Themes at Community Meetings

The common themes from the Stormwater Conversations provided PWSA with some useful input on:

- The best ways to get the word out to publicize future public meetings and distributing information includes a combination of media, such as email lists, US mail, telephone calls, articles in local

newspapers, social media posts, signs on public transportation, and in person and virtual meetings.

- The importance of using layperson terms in communication.
- The concept of the Joint Task Force was generally well-received, with broad representation supported.
- PWSA should collaborate with other agencies whenever possible.
- Maintenance of stormwater infrastructure is very important to the public.
- The need to address springs, landslides, and add more trees and “green” to neighborhoods.
- PWSA should provide more information on financial assistance, transparency in how PWSA is using the funds from the stormwater fee including specific infrastructure and costs, and steps homeowners can take to manage stormwater on their properties.

## **2. Comments Received Electronically on the Strategic Plan for Stormwater Feedback Form and from Other Sources (e.g. letters, emails, phone conversations).**

### **Summary of Public Comments to the Stormwater Strategic Plan (as of 7/11/2023) by Six Top Priority Actions**

**Comment period ended on June 30, 2023**

**Comments received electronically on the Stormwater Strategic Plan Feedback Form - 17**

**Comments received from Other Sources (e.g. letters, emails, phone conversations) – 20**

**Highlight – Key comments**

**PWSA Response: provided for initiatives that are feasible and PWSA has not already addressed in other sections of the comments.**

#### **1. Develop a Communications Framework -**

- PWSA should set up avenues of communication that can be built upon, and at a minimum reaches out to people via social media, regular city-wide meetings, and ways to directly contact people who don't have access to media or events, such as through mailers and door to door efforts.
- Actively engage the community on this, on a watershed by watershed basis. Make sure that you get actual community input, that represents community members like the City did with their participatory budget meetings a few years ago – e.g. the “Potholes and Pierogis” meeting at Goodwill in Lawrenceville.
- Stormwater Ambassadors build trust and can help with communication, extend this program and consider compensating them for their time. **PWSA Response: PWSA will continue to consider ways that a Community Ambassador Program can be integrated into our outreach programs. We are evaluating this for implementation in 2024.**
- PWSA needs to invest in more community relations/engagement. The one person you have working for you can't be everywhere all the time. You need to do more and do better. **PWSA Response: PWSA is actively hiring to build staff in the Public Affairs Department. Between additional staff and a potential Community Ambassador program, we hope to be able to expand outreach.**

- I would recommend expanding efforts and partnering with organizations that have a following on social media to get more involvement. I would also create communications for homeowners and workshops on how they can help- like what to plant in their yards and how to install rain barrels. **PWSA Response: These are great ideas. Noted for implementation.**
- Can you live stream or set up Zoom for these meetings? Most of the time I am out of town and would at least like to hear what's said. Also Zooming would help parents because they would not need childcare to attend a meeting.
- The communications framework presented in PWSAs draft plan mentions the need to partner and collaborate with grassroots community organizations, but it is not clear how that collaboration would function in practice.
- 3RWK is interested in the ways in which non-governmental organizations can be involved in the communication process. It is not clear from the plan how the communications framework would create space for new or small organizations to become involved. We would like to suggest that PWSA incorporate a working group for NGOs into its communications framework, through which local organizations can follow the plan's development and implementation. **PWSA Response: PWSA will add 3 Rivers Waterkeeper to our distribution list, as well as other relevant NGOs.**
- Regarding day-to-day communication strategies, 3RWK believes that a mix of approaches is necessary. Communication mediums such as email lists, physical mail, and telephone calls will all reach different people in different ways. Articles in local newspapers, social media posts, and signs on public transportation could likewise reach additional people. Meetings such as the stormwater conversation series provide an opportunity for individuals to interact directly with planners, asking questions and providing feedback. Because all of these strategies have different purposes and reach different audiences, 3RWK believes that an equitable communication strategy must use a combination of mediums. **PWSA Response: Agreed.**
- We appreciate the Ambassador Program. It's a good model for community engagement and should be continued as these projects progress.
- I think general alerts (either text or email) to accounts that have "work nearby" or upcoming work in their watershed might offer the most transparency and reach to the broadest level of residents.
- Having formal, organized and sustainable funded groups for each watershed may prove difficult and costly.
- Better general level of communication for planned/ongoing work. The map online doesn't reach anywhere near the level of details people need when construction is happening around their neighborhoods. Examples: when will projects start, estimated timelines, costs and most importantly: why work is even being done in the first place. **PWSA Response: PWSA will look into the feasibility of more detailed "work nearby" emails and alerts.**
- PGH2O should use phone numbers or emails (which are associated with user accounts) to alert account holders of work being done in their watershed.

- Critical that it be informative and transparent. Challenging to ensure that specific methods chosen reach all residents and stakeholders. And what are the funding mechanisms to support and maintain a high level of communication services?
- Seems like some % of these funds could serve to support local org stewardship, ambassadors programs, and similar initiatives, that could tie back-in directly with the Communication Framework and the propagation of urban/resident support for projects in their communities.
- Successful implementation will require an all-hands-on-deck approach, from different levels of government, public agencies, non-profits, and investors. The first comment for PWSA is to develop a relationship-building role to its Government Affairs and Consumer Relations departments. The second comment is to embrace transparency as a means to develop trust within those relationships. The financial leveraging and co-benefit opportunities identified in the stormwater plan requires transparent relationship building.
- Dialogues among the communities of the City's urban watersheds have been maturing with Task Force facilitation. This is a functioning model and PWSA should take official steps, such as Board resolution and budget to financially sustain its watershed and task force partners as they develop and deploy communications. This is also a means for PWSA to achieve Environmental Justice commitment with initial steps toward restoration of trust, transparent communication, relationship building, and true community process investment.
- Outreach to renters is really important. Emails and mailed pamphlets based on address rather than billing address would be helpful. **PWSA Response: This is good information. PWSA will look into alternatives to communicate with renters, who may not necessarily receive PWSA bills.**
- Pictures of women of color in the SSP are missing names. The names of the other Ambassadors are in the pictures. The picture of the Clean Water Action Event is missing the names (left to right): Jo Anne Tippet, Dana Fowler, Ix Pomaj Chakmam Yajalaji. **PWSA Response: Corrected in final text.**

## 2. Joint Task Force on Stormwater-

- JTF - hybrid system working at both neighborhood and city level. Grassroots community organizations are stakeholders with expertise - curious about what their role is.
- Regional Stormwater Program like NEORS and include Allegheny County.
- MOUs between City Depts and PWSA on who pays for what and streamlining interdepartmental approvals.
- Pittsburgh needs a property buyout program to deal with flooding. This should be part of the Joint Task Force.
- Develop a schedule with deadlines for critical items identified in the report.
- The City needs to put money into the budget for GI maintenance.
- The JTF may be a great solution and avoids having to start over every time a new mayor is elected.
- The Allegheny County Conservation District is a proposed invitee to the JTF and would certainly agree to participate.



- Cost-benefit analyses are complex, ALCOSAN looks forward to more detailed project prioritization in the JTF and wishes to participate on the JTF.
- Working with the city to create a stormwater management-friendly landscaping guidelines for all new commercial projects and make sure that zoning allows for green roofs.
- What is the ideal way for PWSA and the City to collaborate? We are excited to hear about a proposed stormwater joint task force. How can our City SW Task Force work with the Joint Task Force? What is the status of this Task Force? (Comment from City Planning)
- Also include in the Joint Task Force city planning/zoning, SPC (who should represent and advise upstream municipalities as these municipalities have a large impact stormwater, and or other regional planning folks, Port Authority?)
- City and PWSA still need cooperative agreement for who owns, operates and maintains infrastructure. Should be a part of Joint Task Force work.
- Page 16 - Surrounding MOUs, are/will there be timelines for these? Under point 4 of the proposed goals for joint-task force, we need to ensure there are very clear and specific expectations and guidelines surrounding what is and is not allowed in the ROW. Some of our engineers have concerns there is an assumption that parks and other green spaces are "free" space. We must ensure public spaces remain public-focused (both green spaces and ROW).
- Page 33 - PWSA and the City should work on a set of standard BMPs that work in various situations to facilitate permitting and standardize maintenance. (Comment from City Planning)
- Can we work to optimize City and PWSA ground disturbance? Better coordination on ROW work, so when PWSA needs to work on water lines we can line it up with other utility and repaving work. (Comment from City Planning)
- I support a Joint Task Force. But the idea of "fewer cooks in the kitchen" should apply here.
- The joint task force is a good idea, as long as the right parties are involved and there aren't too many entities involved, which would overcomplicate it. As someone who has worked in the federal government space, I know it is easy to make these processes overly bureaucratic, so simplification is crucial.
- Key to efficient service delivery, identification of priority projects, transparency, and effective region-wide communication/information sharing is a formation and sustainment of a Joint Task Force that pulls-in agencies and partners who work in this arena and those adjacent to it. Firm commitments (via an MOU or similar) for all relevant parties to commit to the plan and process. Given the investments that the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy has made in and across numerous critical watersheds, I'm/we're hopeful that we'll be invited to join the Task Force.
- PWSA needs outside assistance to fully implement a functioning and credible Task Force. While PWSA must lead the establishment of this task force with ALL representatives listed in the plan, including community and watershed, groups, it needs elected official recognition. Someone needs to get the Mayor and other elected officials to provide it gravitas.

- PWSA must immediately finalize negotiations of a MOU with the City of Pittsburgh to formalize the structure, ownership, and responsibilities of the Task Force and the recommendations that come from it.
- The Joint Task Force needs to be charged with innovation to address barriers. For instance, workforce development can quickly get bogged down in contracting and budgetary constraints. The Pittsburgh region has a recent history with effective workforce development programs in manufacturing, culinary and other arts. Administrative and legal innovation needs to be encouraged to overcome barriers to applying those workforce development sector models to water infrastructure and landscape management.
- This Task Force should not be limited to governmental agencies or utilities. It is important to have watershed task force representatives, Indigenous organizations, land stewards, and community organizations as participants. Their knowledge, views, and opinions should be included in processes such as information sharing. In many situations, the community members are the last to know about projects, or are not included in decisions about projects.

**PWSA Response: PWSA will use these comments to develop the Joint Task Force membership and agenda.**

### **3. Priority Areas for Investment –**

- When defining areas for investment, more value should be placed on where there is overlap between equity (neighborhoods defined as having high vulnerability on both the Allegheny County Environment Justice Index and the EPA Environmental Justice Screen) as well as Areas of Stormwater Opportunity. This would change the top proposed priority watersheds to allow more people in need to be covered and the most underserved communities with the best prospects for green stormwater projects will be served. Environmental justice areas should receive priority. **PWSA Response: PWSA feels that all Four Lenses of Localized Flooding, Water Quality, Equity, and Areas of Stormwater Opportunity in the Strategic Plan strike the right balance of addressing flooding, regulatory water quality requirements, equity, and prioritizing areas of stormwater opportunity to feasibly and cost-effectively manage stormwater.**
- We are concerned by the lack of an expected timeline, or an estimation of how the goals of the strategic plan would align with ALCOSAN’s Clean Water Plan.
- What is the plan for future work? The timelines seem to end with this document.
- Without clear next steps and tangible plans, it is unclear how PWSA plans to incorporate green infrastructure in stormwater management.
- PWSA needs a timeline for the Master Plan for each priority watershed identified in the Plan. PWSA can get rolling on this step with data already on hand and dialogues already consummated through the watershed groups and Task Forces. This process should be integrated with the communication process so that trust is built around long term watershed Master Plans. Those Watershed Master Plans must recognize that implementation will require collaboration and multiple funding sources. This issue is most apparent in the implementation of green infrastructure. Stormwater opportunities

can be found in Parks, open spaces, streets, vacant lots throughout the City. PWSA must be transparent about the distribution of its funding for Green Infrastructure so joint budgeting and financing for large scale holistic projects, such as the Negley Run Conveyance, can be accomplished.

- There is too much “could” or “shoulda” and not enough “will do” in the Plan. We encourage you to release the Final Plan with partners and identified implementation steps clearly identified.
- It would help to have an explanation of how the various stages of PWSA’s plan interact with ALCOSAN’s Clean Water Plan, or to have an estimated timeline for the next few stages.

**PWSA Response: PWSA will incorporate next steps, a timeline and how the Stormwater Strategic Plan coordinates with ALCOSAN’s Clean Water Plan into ongoing and long-term public engagement on stormwater.**

- Coordinate water and sewer improvements with other utility tasks to avoid tearing up new road surfaces.
- Areas of Stormwater Opportunity needs to focus on small-scale opportunities as well, not just large ones. The curb bump-outs around Wightman Park are great, and they have made walking (especially street crossings) in the area safer and more enjoyable!
- A broader partnership with DOMI on this sort of work to improve pedestrian safety in other neighborhoods would be very valuable. Also, don't overlook considering incentives for homeowners to reduce their own stormwater production, as other cities have done.
- Hill District and Uptown should be a higher priority.
- Saw Mill Run should rank high but the stormwater problems (and projects) should be done upstream as well.
- Page 40 - there should be efforts to set up a framework to remediate the Saw Mill Run flood plain. Perhaps the use can remain similar but the way it's built up needs to be re thought. Eg. Abandoned lots could be reimagined as opportunities for repair or restorations and any heavy developments should have restrictions/requirements if allowed at all. **PWSA Response: This would be a good topic for the Joint Task Force.**
- Nine Mile Run should be a higher priority. Waterways that are accessible in public parks should be a higher priority because my children like to play in the streams and I don’t want to worry about them getting a disease.
- Make sure you also consider issues related to undermined areas and landslide prone slopes when determining priority areas.
- Has PWSA considered privately owned vacant property as potential sites for BMPs? **PWSA Response: This would be a good topic for the Joint Task Force.**
- We should be investing in a green way strategy along all the major waterways that include wetland restorations to help improve water quality within the rivers to help mitigate CSO impacts.
- I think bioswales and creating green infrastructure on existing roadways should be added. For example all concrete dividers could be an opportunity for plantings.

- I think that there needs to be more of a focus in environmental justice and helping historically divested communities with stormwater management with the fees coming in.
- 3RWK does however have concerns about the localized flooding data that PWSA uses in the plan to weigh priority areas for investment. The map relies heavily on reported data, which might not accurately reflect flooding distribution. People with chronic basement flooding might eventually stop reporting if reporting those backups does not result in change. **PWSA Response: PWSA will incorporate more data gathering on problem areas into ongoing and long-term public engagement on stormwater.**
- In the interest of improving the localized flooding data, we believe that PWSA should consider taking advantage of the new communication strategy to simultaneously communicate to Pittsburghers how and when to report flooding. **PWSA Response: PWSA will incorporate more data gathering on problem areas into ongoing and long-term public engagement on stormwater.**
- How will ROW stormwater management be handled? What is PWSA's viewpoint on it as a viable method? Should we turn focus to vacant public land and other large scale projects? (Comment from City Planning).
- Climate risk should also be prioritized, using updated datasets/satellite imagery.
- Priority areas are those at highest risk and will continue to bring value to properties and businesses in PGH
- Data driven and impact on historically underserved communities will hopefully be front and center. Scaling of projects with the incorporation of peer-city best practices and models. Localized flooding, equity and critical areas of opportunity seem critically important.
- Land use practices need to change in order for the priority watersheds to execute and developed Watershed Master Plans. Stormwater ordinances for new developments are not enough. Codes and city ordinances need to be changed to more stormwater conveyance can occur on public lands and Rights-of-Ways. More investments on private lands connecting to public conveyances need to be envisioned. In addition, incentives need to be properly aligned. There may be opportunities for microshed planning where public and private landowners work in tandem to manage stormwater.
- The Strategic Plan outlines new water quality priorities that will consider how ALCOSAN's Clean Water Plan and the regionalization of intermunicipal sewers and associated facilities will work in concert with PWSA's Strategic Plan. ALCOSAN would like to better understand these priorities and the planned infrastructure as well as pair the priorities with strategic flow reduction to bring the most affordable value to the region. (ALCOSAN's comment).
- If targeted buyouts are a strategy, involving housing orgs and being extremely transparent is of utmost importance.
- We also note the environmental justice implications of strategies such as targeted property buyouts. If PWSA is considering these types of strategies (as the plan suggests), we want to stress the importance of centering the affected communities. Some studies have shown the importance of involving residents, including renters, in the process and

ensuring that compensation is based on the residents' actual needs, with the consent and support of the affected communities.

- When prioritizing flooding areas, provide info on how residents can easily report flooding.
- Vacant land is an opportunity. Beware of eco-gentrification without pricing out low income residents. Could land be out to other good use - affordable housing? Community gardens? See Philadelphia LandCare lot greening studies.
- Equity and Areas of Stormwater Opportunity are major lenses for analyzing for the Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar community. This community should be given more focus. The maps used for these lenses leave the neighborhood out. The following are points of importance for consideration:
  - Much work is still needed regarding developing a picture of stormwater flow, wet basements occurring during storms, and the extent of basement backups. There is a mistrust of PWSA and what the company will do if these issues are reported. It is felt there will be negative consequences or that PWSA will do nothing to help.
  - Navarro Field may be an area of stormwater opportunity. It was created as a baseball field for neighborhood children. The current use seems to be a storage site for construction equipment (it's off of Dean Street). The site is on a hill above the Brilliant Railway tracks and is above Washington Blvd. Maybe it could be converted to a park with green infrastructure added and a water retention area to slow water from flowing downhill.
  - Oakdene Street in the Chadwick area of Lincoln-Lemington is in the path of the Watershed while Chadwick Park and its sports field has been studied as to its potential for stormwater management, pond overflow basin restoration. It has also been studied for rainwater conservation catchment for rainwater reuse for food/forestry/orchard/permaculture conservation. While Grounded Strategies has documentation, there is more indigenous infrastructure documentation from Chief Ynga Council member Ix Pomaj-chakmam-yajalaji of the Iroquois Confederacy of Aborigine American People, and Grand Ynga of The Onkwehonwe Bah-kab kob-utzil ux-wi'il, creator of IPAA Food Forestry Arts and Culture, at law of the Constitution at Article 1, Section 2, Clause 3 "and excluding Indians not taxed". These documents should be reviewed by PWSA.
  - Paulson Field should be evaluated for stormwater storage as was done at Mellon Park. There is often standing water for days after storms. The Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar Vision Plan is on Engage.pgh and has maps.

**PWSA Response: PWSA will evaluate these potential locations for stormwater management.**

#### **4. Define Initial Investment Strategies**

- PWSA should invest in more sustainable stormwater management practices instead of containerizing and storage of large volumes of water, more progressive solutions to runoff.
- It is critically important to incorporate more green infrastructure into this plan and rely less on gray infrastructure.
- There is a lot of detailed grey water solutions in this plan, there needs to be more green infrastructure and greening details.
- Green infrastructure should be a key focus of the strategic plan including the creation of bioswales along roads, pocket parks, hillside plantings to prevent mudslides, planting native species, and decreasing impervious surface areas.
- The direction, concepts, and proposals of the draft Stormwater Strategic Plan are an impressive listing of potentials. The Negley Run Watershed Task Force is well-situated and eager to work with PWSA in the Plan's implementation. The breadth of the proposals are ambitious and the Task Force appreciates that PWSA did not let capacity concerns limit its vision. The report repeats often that stormwater program implementation will require partnerships and collaboration. PWSA must work hard to build those partnerships as they will not happen easily.
- The Negley Run Task Force is set to do its part and match PWSA's efforts to reach out to others. PWSA must reciprocate with public commitments within its budget and five year plans to pursue the innovation and partnerships that are suggested by the Plan.

#### **5. Establish Guiding Principles for Level of Service and Flooding-**

- Fully funded backwater valve program for residents severely impacted by basement backups. This, plus pipe lining instead of full replacement to only a 5 year level of service would be less disruptive costly, and provide a higher level of basement protection.
- PWSA is considering a new stormwater plan shortly after a major federal investment in stormwater infrastructure through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. This is something that PWSA briefly addresses in the new plan. Given the likelihood of substantial available funding over the next few years, the opportunity for ambitious new projects is unprecedented. We are interested in learning more about how PWSA plans to make use of this funding, and we hope that PWSA will communicate those plans to the public at the earliest opportunity.
- Having SMART goals here may be helpful not only in both achieving them but communicating targets to customers. This will also hold PGH20 accountable for changes made to level of service and lessons learned from flooding events.
- Level of service should be communicated better because it is a relatively complicated term for the layman. **PWSA Response: PWSA can provide a more in-depth explanation of Level of Service concepts, including return intervals of rainfall events. Both of these technical concepts can be a challenge to understand but are important for informed conversations about cost-effective services that utilities are able to provide to manage stormwater.**
- A rigid Level of Service definition could deter collaboration or the leveraging of stormwater fee for innovative projects and limit opportunities to capture multiple co-benefits and meet inter-agency objectives. Allow the Level of Service definition apply only to limited purposes around achievement of PUC fee approval. Let the Level of

Service definition recede in decision-making importance when negotiating cross-media and inter-party collaborations.

#### 6. Leverage Stormwater Fee–

- The stormwater fee is a rain tax and just another way to extort money from residents.
- Make the stormwater fee credit program as easy to use as possible.
- Stormwater fee application is complicated and requires hiring an expensive engineer to perform the calculations. **PWSA Response: PWSA is streamlining and simplifying the stormwater fee credit application.**
- Stormwater fee credit amount is currently too small to be an effective incentive. Incentivize to the maximum degree homeowner use of capture and storage practices, as *en masse* they have a great effect on downstream infrastructure use.
- Water and sewage is outrageously expensive. We can't afford any more fees.
- Establish a grant Program for GSI on Private Property (homeowners and small businesses) similar to the one in Philadelphia using SW Fee funds.
- Private GSI grant program can help encourage on lot stormwater retention.
- "Public-private partnerships" can often just be a hidden form of privatization. Don't give ratepayer funds to big business.
- We love our public water and sewer system! Keeping rates under control is important, but we are so glad to have a publicly-owned and accountable system that is finally making the investments that are needed!
- LandForce asked if they could please be included in the workforce development section of the plan (and appendix). It is a local resource and should be mentioned, as PowerCorps was. **PWSA Response: PWSA has refrained from mentioning specific PWSA contractors in the Stormwater Strategic Plan.**
- Lowest bidder contracting hurts projects. Best value or qualifications-based selection options is huge, especially with non-traditional GSI.
- A more steady or consistent program is also needed in addition to PWSA's GSI workforce development program. We need more maintenance for GI projects if they aren't going to be weed whacked down.
- Target outreach for homeowner stormwater BMP projects in high priority areas.
- PWA needs to inspect stormdrains even in non-flood prone areas.
- The stormwater fee may be an important source of funding, but the fact that PWSA is imposing this additional fee makes it all the more important that PWSA proactively communicate how they are using that money. The public should know what specific plans PWSA is developing: how PWSA intends to use the money, what projects are being considered, and when communities can be expected to see results.
- What is the plan for using the SW fee funding? Will this be a part of the master planning work?
- As a public utility, PGH20 receives tax revenue in addition to a customer payment for profit. Any expenditures should ultimately be made in an effort to increase base tax revenue for PGH20, which then in turn allows the reduction in customer costs.
- I encourage PGH20 to think creatively about ways/potential revenue streams for collecting, cleaning and repurposing storm water. (Again in an effort to reduce customer costs).

- Would love to see incentives added for green infrastructure installations, water collection and storage in/around commercial and residential properties. **PWSA Response: PWSA currently has a stormwater fee credit program.**
- Stormwater fee should be used for OTHER environmental investments outside of water so we have a multipronged climate approach. **PWSA Response: PWSA's PUC-approved tariff does not allow this.**
- I believe the perception is that the current fee structures are high and residents don't yet see where these additional \$\$s are going -- to address this comprehensively and point specifically to the infrastructure investments that are necessary and the cost of them will be an ongoing and necessary conversation.
- PWSA, in its tariff defense to PUC and within its budgeting, should identify a percentage of the stormwater fee revenue to support a formal structure for community involvement and mutual learning at the watershed scale. The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy's work to convene and facilitate urban task forces around priority watersheds provides an appropriate community liaison partnership. In addition, the Watersheds of South Pittsburgh, Upstream Pittsburgh, and the Mon Water Project are positioned to provide communication assistance.
- PWSA should embrace an element of flexibility in the use of the stormwater fee revenue. In addition, PWSA must encourage contract innovation among its staff and to all of its agency and regulatory partners, especially, the Pennsylvania Utility Commission. Innovation should be encouraged in all PWSA departments and partners, such as project financing, contracting, design and delivery.
- PWSA needs to send out licensed insured installers with rainbarrels for all residential customers. They also need to work with the city to send out their concrete people to remove concrete from as many properties as possible. PWSA needs to use the infrastructure government from the government instead of raising rates all the time.
- Money from the fee can be used to help our community fund small research projects for stormwater management. Also, the fee can be used to paint/coat basement walls with non-toxic water protectant. This could be done like the lead line replacement program. Finally, the fee can fund community stormwater stewardship of public parks and spaces. As mentioned earlier, Paulson Field and Chadwick Park could be funded, as well as Highland Park and Riverview Park.
- Stormwater fee - transparency, show that fee was put to good use.

#### **4. Comments Received Electronically on the EngagePGH Website**

The EngagePGH platform, available through the City of Pittsburgh, provides an opportunity for residents to participate in the long-term stormwater strategic planning efforts underway at the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority. The site also includes a video and an FAQ about our strategic planning efforts for multiple ways to learn about this important work.

Community input is essential to our long-term planning efforts, and EngagePGH is an additional tool PWSA can use to gather feedback about the stormwater challenges Pittsburgh residents experience.



Using the interactive web portal, [engage.pittsburghpa.gov/stormwater](https://engage.pittsburghpa.gov/stormwater), the Pittsburgh community can participate in helping PWSA develop stormwater solutions that over time will create a safer, more stormwater-resilient community. The site provides three opportunities for feedback, and currently remains active for input from the community.

### 1. Stormwater Issue Locations Map

Participants can add a marker at map locations to identify basement backups, overland flooding, routine maintenance locations, or other stormwater issues that were previously observed with the approximate date(s) when the issue occurred.

PWSA will use this information (37 contributions as of July 2023, with issues such as storm drains not properly working or areas of flooding reported) to inform our planning process. For current issues, PWSA requests that participants please contact our 24-hour emergency Dispatch at (412) 255-2423.

### 2. What topics do you want to see addressed in order of importance?

Participants can rank topics in order of importance, such as: public health and safety, stormwater runoff and pollution, green infrastructure to fortify neighborhoods, increasing partnerships, improving stormwater infrastructure to mitigate the effects of climate change.

As of July 2023, most important to the 36 respondents were:

- Improving stormwater infrastructure to create a more resilient city protected from the effects of climate change;
- Using green infrastructure to beautify and make neighborhoods more resilient;
- Protecting our waterways from erosion and pollution due to stormwater runoff.

Least important was - Increasing partnerships with the City of Pittsburgh, the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, Watershed Taskforces, and other community groups.

### 3. Do you have any questions about the Stormwater Strategic Plan?

Participants can pose stormwater-related questions to PWSA's stormwater project managers. Only three questions were logged as of July 2023, and these were inquiries about storm drains, curbing and flooding. PWSA will use this information (37 contributions as of July 2023, with issues such as storm drains not properly working or areas of flooding reported) to inform our planning process. (Note that PWSA encourages customers to report stormwater issues to contact our 24-hour emergency Dispatch at (412) 255-2423.)